

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 /097 W
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R 011600Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5529

INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

CINCUEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2820

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AG

SUBJECT: US-ALGERIAN RELATIONS: DISCUSSION WITH ADJALI

1. I CALLED ON ABDELMAJID ADJALI, DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 30, IMMEDIATELY AFTER SEEING SECRETARY GENERAL OF MINISTRY BENHABYLES. I TOLD ADJALI I DID NOT EXPECT HIM TO MAKE A WIDE-RANGING COMMENTARY SUCH AS BENHABYLES HAD, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE BRIEF STATEMENT OF HIS VIEWS ON STATE OF OUR RELATIONS.

2. ADJALI SAID THIS WAS LARGE ORDER BUT HE WOULD GIVE IT TRY. FIRST OF ALL, HE THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN PERCEPTIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN OUR RELATIONS BUT IT HAD NOT GONE AS FAR AS IT COULD. ABSENCE OF ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON UNDOUBTEDLY A FACTOR AND ALGERIANS MOVING TO CORRECT THAT. ON THE PLUS SIDE, WITH THE TERMINATION OF HOSTILITIES IN VIETNAM AND WITH THE ADMISSION OF ANGOLA TO UN, MOST SERIOUS CONTENTIOUS INTER-
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NATIONAL ISSUES BETWEEN US HAD BEEN TAKE CARE OF. ALGERIANS HAD

BEEN SKEPTICAL ABOUT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S INITIATIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA BUT HAD NOT ATTACKED THOSE EFFORTS AS WAS THEIR CUSTOM WHEN THEY WERE PARTICULARLY EXERCISED ABOUT SOMETHING. SIMILARLY, IN NEAR EAST THEY WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT WHATEVER THE PARTIES ACCEPTED AND HAD NO INTENTION OF BEING HOLIER THAN THE POPE. OTHER ISSUES BETWEEN US WERE LARGELY ROUTINE EXCEPT FOR SAHARA WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTED VITAL ALGERIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS.

3. ADJALI THEN SPOKE ABOUT SAHARA IN TERMS VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE USED BY SECRETARY GENERAL BENHABYLES AND REPORTED SEPARATELY. IN PARTICULAR HE USED SAME LANGUAGE THAT BENHABYLES DID IN DESCRIBING SAUDI MEDIATION EFFORTS, I.E., BOTH SIDES PROSPECTING AND IT TOO EARLY TO TALK OF MEDIATION. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED VERY CLEARLY ALGERIAN DESIRE FOR AMERICAN NEUTRALITY ON THIS USSE AND CONCERN OVER MOROCCAN LONG RANGE INTENTIONS, REFERRING PARTICULARLY TO HASSAN'S TALK OF PARIS-MADRID-RABAT AXIS. HE ASKED, HWY, IF HE WERE INTERESTED IN PEACE IN AREA, HASSAN DID NOT SPEAK OF RABAT-ALGIERS-TUNIS-TRIPOLI AXIS. WHAT NEED HAD HE TO DRAW FOREIGN PWOERS INTO NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS?

4. COMMENT: AS ON OCCASIONS IN THE PAST I WAS STRUCK BY REMARKABLE SIMILARITY OF PRESENTATIONS RECEIVED FROM THREE DIFFERENT ALGERIAN OFFICIALS, EACH WITH A VERY DIFFERENT PERSONALITY--HAMDANI, BENHABYLES AND ADJALI. THERE IS A REMARKABLE CONSISTENCY AND DISCIPLINE IN SUCH MATTERS WITHIN THE ALGERIAN OFFICIAL ESTABLISHMENT. IN WAS ALSO STRUCK BY WHAT SEEMED TO BE A SUBTLE SHIFT IN THE COMMON ATTITUDE ON THE SAHARA. NO ONE MADE CONFIDENT PREDICTIONS ABOUT HASSAN BEING BROUGHT DOWN BY INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS OR ABOUT OUR BACKING A LOSING HORSE, NOR DID THEY DISMISS THE SAUDI MEDIATION EFFORT WITH SAME FACILE RHETORIC THEY HAVE USED IN COMMENTING ON PREVIOUS SUCH EFFORTS. ALGERIANS FROM BOUMEDIENE DOWN SEEM TO BE SOMEWHAT ON DEFENSIVE.PARKER

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